Erwin Knoll
The Progressive
409 East Main St.,
Madison, WI 53703

2/28/90

Dear Erwin Knoll,

You are close to my age so I am less uneasy in addressing you as I'd be reluctant to address a younger man.

Have you ever really stopped to assess what it is that drives you to your campaign against the State of Israel? Not any particular government, and I share your dislike of the present and recent ones, but in everything you've writtrn and published, you inveigh against the state.

The disproportionate and entirely unbalanced space you've used in your own magazine is not enough. Now you use The Nation, where Navasky is like-minded and has a similar record.

Quite aside from criticism of the Podhoretzes, of whom I think as you do, you say those who think other than you do, see other than you see, give "mindless support for Israel's garrison-state policies."

And quite aside from whether or not this is fair or unfair, true in the normal sense or not true, how many countries can you rememember, or governments, without what someone can describe as garrison-state policies when, aside from domestic disturbances they have 20 or more states in a persisting state of war with them? In Israel's case, from the day it was established by war.

In any rational and reasonable assessment, the actualities are enormously complex, much more than in most disputes and controversies. I do not remember ever seeing in your magazine any effort to inform your readers, most of whom I presume are too young to really be aware of those many factors and considerations, of these actualities. If any of this is in your mind, I recall no reflection of it. It all comes out as hatred for the State of Israel and of even its existence and endless tirades against its existence.

Have you stopped to think why the 20-some states remain in a state of war with Israel, why Arafat blows smoke about it, why the Arabs have been slaughtering those Arabs who even talk to Israelis about peace, why if it even considers peace and the peaceful existence of a Jewish state the PLO doesn't change its charter? And recently, just before Arafat's ploy I refer to in the enclosed letter I've just written Frontline, again refused to?

The grim reality is that no Muslim leader has or can hope to survive recognizing the existence of any Jewish state. Until this changes, and I see no prospect of any change, there can be and there will be no peace for Israel. This is a condition no Israeli government can change. The refusal of all Muslims to recognize any Jewish right to any tiny portion of Palestine is clear and amply reported, going back to at least the days of the British Peel Commission, when Jews accepted only 10 percent of the area of the present state and no Muslim would even talk about it.

None of us is Merlin and we can't remember the future. But if we don't remember the past we are doomed to relive it. The possibility of another holocaust does exist and there are millions who lust for it. If and when it happens, those who think and write and publish as you and Navasky do will bear a share of the responsibility.

As editors you are less than honest and do not meet the responsibilities of editors in informing their readers. Of anything but their unhidden hatred.

I fear you both reflect some probably entirely unrecognized inner hatred. I hope not!

Because of my considerable respect for the many fine things both of you have done this really does trouble me. You have both seriously impaired the amount of good you can do in your intended lack of balance and honesty in this matter. Sincerely, Harold Weisberg

Harold